

State of Wisconsin\Government Accountability Board

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JUDGE MICHAEL BRENNAN
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DATE: February 19, 2009

TO: Wisconsin County Clerks
Wisconsin Municipal Clerks
City of Milwaukee Election Commission
Milwaukee County Election Commission

FROM: Nathaniel E. Robinson
Elections Division Administrator
Government Accountability Board

SUBJECT: Update on the Four-Year Voter Record Maintenance
Notice of Suspension of Registration Postcard Mailing

<p>This Four-Year Voter Record Maintenance (aka, 4-Year Purge) Update is FYI. No Need for Action or Response!</p>
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Wisconsin statutes §§6.50 (1) and (2) mandate the purge of voters who have not voted within the past four years. A mailing is required to be sent to registered voters who have been qualified to vote for the past four years but who have not voted. As stipulated by statute, the mailing notifies voters that if they do not respond within 30 days, their registration will be inactivated -- not deleted -- from the Statewide Voter Registration System.

On February 20, approximately 313,205 voters will be mailed Notice of Suspension of Registration postcards, and will be given 30-days to respond, or until March 23. Complying with the statutory four-year voter record maintenance requirement will cost approximately \$96,000 for printing and postage of a returnable postcard to our office.

As of February 1, 2009, voters eligible for the Four-Year Voter Record Maintenance have had a status of "Active – Suspended (4 Years Notice)" in SVRS. These voters will remain on the poll lists through the April 7, 2009, Spring Election.

The Notice of Suspension of Registration postcard notifies voters that their voter registration will be suspended for failure to vote within the previous 4-year period. It advises the voter that they may apply for a continuation of registration by returning the attached Application for Continuation of Registration within 30 days. Returned Applications for Continuation will be processed by G.A.B. staff.

It is expected that some voters will contact their respective municipal clerks about the Notice of Suspension of Registration postcard. Many municipalities had not completed entering voter registrations and voter history for the 2008 November Presidential and General Election by

February 1, 2009, when the identification process was run in SVRS. Electors who voted in November 2008, or who voted in February 2009, or who vote in April 2009 will be treated as having submitted an Application for Continuation of Registration, and will be updated from a status of “Active – Suspended (4 Years Notice)” to a status of “Active – Registered.”

Provider and Self-Provider clerks should expect some voters to return Applications for Continuation of Registrations directly to their municipality. The materials posted to G.A.B.’s website (<http://elections.wi.gov>) with this correspondence include a suggested guide for clerks. The guide is intended to help clerks answer some common questions about the Four-Year Voter Maintenance process and Notice of Suspension of Registration mailing.

G.A.B. staff will also monitor SVRS regularly to identify voters in “Active – Suspended (4 Years Notice)” status who have voter history for November 2008 or after. G.A.B. will update voter records appropriately. During the week of April 11, 2009, G.A.B. staff will send clerks a report that identifies voters that have been marked as “Inactive – 4 Year Maintenance” and the hard copy of any returned postcards from their municipality.

Included on G.A.B.’s website are the following materials to assist clerks in responding to questions about the Four-Year Voter Record Maintenance process and the Notice of Suspension of Registration mailing. The attached materials include the following:

- 1) A Four-Year Voter Record Maintenance Protocol, Guide to Clerks and Election Commissioners.
- 2) An example of the Notice of Suspension of Registration postcard sent to voters on February 20, 2009.
- 3) A Revised Timeline for the Four-Year Voter Record Maintenance Policy and Process.
- 4) A Suggested Protocol for Responding to voters who call regarding the Four-Year Voter Record Maintenance and the Notice of Suspension of Registration, given to G.A.B. staff.

Clerks with questions may contact their SVRS Specialist, or the G.A.B. Help Desk at (608) 261-2028. Thank you.